

REVIEWS

AMERICAN HI-FI

*Fight the Frequency*

[Hi-Fi Killers/The Ascot Club]

Backing Miley Cyrus, as three-quarters of the band has done for the last few years, American Hi-Fi doesn't get to play many songs like "Bullet." "I killed myself last night and you were what I used," leader Stacy Jones sings, wallowing in the heartbreak that inspires much of his band's fourth album. "Bullet" is typical of *Fight the Frequency*, which hits a bull's-eye midway between Fountains of Wayne and Nirvana. Like "Flavor of the Week," their 2001 breakout single, their best songs are slick, chunky power-pop sing-alongs. They're emo enough for bummed-out teens but canny enough to keep the mood light and stakes low. On "Lost," these populist rockers shamelessly nick a riff from Bon Jovi's "Never Say Goodbye," pairing it even more shamelessly with a love-as-shipwreck metaphor. It's blueprint pop, but there's passion in the craftsmanship. For kids aging out of the Miley demographic, this disc amounts to continuing education: rock 'n' roll for advanced beginners. —KP

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